

# CHENAR LEAVES

POEMS OF KASHMIR

by

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## **IN MEMORIAM.**

These verses are dedicated to the memory of my father, **the late Lt.-Col. Sir Adelbert Cecil Talbot, K.C.I.E.,** who was the Resident of Kashmir from 1896 to 1900 and a keen admirer of its beauties. During the term of his office he was a true and practical friend to the State. He died in December, 1920.

**MURIEL A. E. BROWN.**

**CALCUTTA, 1921.**



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# CHENAR LEAVES.

*Poems of Kashmir*

## A KASHMIR SHAWL

Rich web of woven dreams! A Kashmir shawl,  
Its warp and woof of silky, pliant hair  
From choice *pashmina* goats, beyond the wall  
Of far Himâlaya brought, with toil and care,  
Then dyed in all the subtlest hues which art  
For eastern looms could cunningly devise,  
And spun in threads so fine, the great world's  
mart

Of patient skill can show no fairer prize.  
The pattern forms methinks a mystic shape  
In Jhelum's windings, or in "tree of life":  
Such blended colours artists' palettes ape  
Closer than weaver's shuttle plying strife.

The art is lost! The spirit of this age  
In love's laborious crafts will not engage.

## THE PILGRIMAGE TO AMARNATH

Mid lofty snows a mystic cavern lies .  
And in its holy precincts dwells a Dove  
Which sometimes to the pilgrim's longing eyes  
Appears, as, filled with fervid ardent love  
They mount the pathway to this sacred spot,  
Their eager eyes all lit with wondrous zeal;  
For blessed he, who has the happy lot  
For ever his glad pilgrimage to seal  
Successful in first gazing on the Dove.

In Palgam's wooded vale assembled there  
The congregations vast of pilgrims rest—  
A varied scene of interest most rare !  
The camp is filled with stir and active zest:  
A vision as of Vedic times 'twill seem  
When all the world was primitive and young  
And nature's worship the absorbing theme  
While Vedic hymns the Hindu bards still  
sung  
What hymn more sweet than that unto the  
Dove?



At night, the camp fires with their ruddy glow  
Against the forest dark send fitful gleams,  
At day, a blue smoke ever soft will blow

In whirling drifts, which holy incense seems  
Above the camp, to waft the fervent prayers

Of this great multitude of faithful souls,  
Transported far above all worldly cares:

And as they march in deepest union rolls  
A chant from voices praising aye the Dove.

How many dream in India's sunny plains

Of hoar Himâlaya's distant, blest retreat!  
And treasure all their little hard-earned gains

To bring them, humble pilgrims, to her feet:  
Decrepit beggars jostling side by side

With lordly merchants, who to make amends  
For sordid lives perhaps, at last decide

To join the pilgrim's pathway as it wends  
Onwards and upwards, still to reach the Dove.

And here an agèd widow with a look

Of rapt devotion on her wrinkled face,  
Her feeble form supported by a crook,

Seeks with the multitude to keep in pace,  
She sinks exhausted, but her spirit still

Restores her trembling limbs once more to  
try

The steep ascent, and resolute of will

The Dove she strives to see 'ere she may die  
Her voice still whispers faint the words "the  
Dove."

A high-born lady in a palanquin

Lies half disclosed, between the curtains  
drawn;

Pushing close by, his face so wild and thin

A naked *fakir* presses eager on.

Strapped in a basket yonder there is seen

A dying youth, still ever upward borne,  
Compelled upon another's strength to lean,

His spirit nearly leaves the body worn  
Ah! will his glazing eyes behold the Dove?

And see! a group of *sadhus* halt hard by,

In saffron-tinted robes, on leopard skins,  
Umbrellas all their shelter, bright of dye:

Their long and matted hair much merit wins!  
And one, a consecrated vow has made

Between the hours of sunrise and sunset  
Never to rest, nor speak—all over laid

With ashes, and with begging bowl will yet  
Devoutly crave forgiveness from the Dove.

The foaming torrent is their lullaby:

Then with the dawn they strike their tents  
and climb

The mountain path where awful fissures lie—

Gulfs yawning deep on either hand—sublime  
A test for hearts! yet dauntless on they go

Until those dizzy heights they now attain  
Which mark the line of everlasting snow,

Where Mahadèv eternally doth reign.  
Ah! who among them first will see the Dove?

At last 'tis reached! The cave of Amarnath!

Within, a mystic frozen column lies—  
Great Siva's form, engraved by nature's art  
Which Hindu devotee here deifies.

By the full August moonlight in the stream  
The pilgrims plunge, as frozen from the cave  
It icy wends—and thus their sins redeem  
As herein penitentially they lave.     \*

And visions came to many pilgrims here  
And many vowed they'd seen the wondrous  
Dove:

\*                   \*                   \*                   \*                   \*

A few among them who could see more clear  
Whispered with awe their vision was of  
Love—

Of *All Pervading Love*.

## LOTUS FLOWERS ON THE DAL LAKE

Kashmir's soul-flower! O thou most sacred  
bloom

What wondrous treasure lies within thy  
heart?

Deep hidden down amidst that rosy gloom

Thy petals as its guardians do their part.

*Om mani padmi hum.\**

Ah! how can I describe thy beauty rare

To those who have not seen thy gracious  
form?

Serene, majestic, yet pulsating there

With love thy full blown petals roseate warm.

*Om mani padmi hum.*

It desecration seems to pry or gaze

With curious eye upon that calyx gold,

Which tremulous yet glowing doth amaze

Us by the jewelled beauty we behold :

*Om mani padmi hum.*

\* A Buddhist *mantra* meaning—"The Jewel of the Flower of the Lotus."

Intricate is the pattern finely wrought

By the Great Craftsman's Hand, with cunning skill

Oh! Lotus bloom thy shrine have many sought  
And worship thee, and oft revere thee still.

*Om mani padmi hum.*

Proudly erect, though full of simple grace

Thy beauteous head is reared towards the  
sun,

Flushed by thy love perhaps is thy fair face  
Or joy that precious jewel to have won.

*Om mani padmi hum.*

The rosy dawn hath kissed thy petal's hue

And on the surface of each leaf is lain

A diamond drop of clearest crystal dew

Quicksilver beads which rolling break in  
twain.

*Om mani padmi hum.*

Thy leaves of deep, yet tender green are  
spread

In multitudes upon the Dal lake's breast—

A noble throng of leaves to form thy bed,

And on each leaf a subtle bloom doth rest.

*Om mani padmi hum.*

Who first with soulful vision clearly saw  
The spiritual jewel here revealed?  
Composed that *mantra* full of occult lore  
In which the mystic secret is concealed?  
*Om mani padmi hum.*

Surely the humble, faithful souls who find  
Some solace in repeating o'er and o'er  
Those magic words, grope blindly for That  
Mind  
Which on the Lotus flower such grace doth  
pour.

*Om mani padmi hum.*

**THE SHALIMAR BAGH***(A Mughal Garden on the Dal Lake)*

O Shalimar! O Shalimar!

A rhythmic sound in thy name rings

A dreamy cadence from afar

Within those syllables which sings

To us of love and joyous days

Of Lalla Rukh! of pleasure feast!

Of fountains clear whose glitt'ring sprays

Drawn from the snows have never ceased

To cast their spell on all who gaze

Upon this handiwork of love—

Reared in Jehangir's proudest days

Homage for Nur Mahal to prove.

For his fair Queen he built these courts

With porphyry pillars smooth and black

Whose grandeur still expresses thoughts

For her that should no beauty lack.

The roses show'ring o'er these walls

Still fondly whisper love lurks here

And still he beckoning to us calls

By yon Dal's shores in fair Kashmir.

## IN GULMARG

In rain and damp among the forest paths

The pine trees tall and darkly solemn loom—  
Some ruddy trunks scooped out to shelt'ring  
    hearths

By weary coolies shivering midst the gloom;  
The grey mists closely round the mountains  
    fall

And sadly cling and all is dank and drear—  
When suddenly a rift breaks through the pall  
Of vapour pale and rays of sun appear,  
The dark cloud curtains swift asunder tear!  
Stretched far below the opalescent plain  
Lies smiling in its tender tints most rare,  
And joyous rainbow beauty mocks the rain:—

A glimpse of Heav'n revealed! Alas! in scorn  
The mists descend and I am left—forlorn.



## IRIS—IN MEMORIAM

In Kashmir valleys blow

Iris

Purple and regal, or white, they show  
The grave's place

And with dignified, imperial grace  
Revive in spring:

Tribute

Each root,—

And love's

Gift of Life Eternal sing

Each year

So dear—

Messages of hope to sad hearts bring,

The dead

Rest nameless and unknown

More constant far than graven stone

Iris

In Kashmir valleys blow.

**PANDITANIS**

With graceful step, erect and slow  
Adown the stone-built, broken stair  
The *panditanis*\* daily go  
And on their heads held high they bear

Bright vessels, which they stooping fill  
Beneath the bridge's wooden pier:  
In pools of clouded amber still  
Which gurgle deep and glowing here.

Their movements of unconscious grace  
Glint in the Jhelum's flowing stream  
Where rich hues shimmering interlace  
And in the glancing ripples gleam,

Then with their slender rounded arms  
They poise the shining *lotas* high,  
Or bashful, with half feigned alarms  
Draw close their veils with gesture shy.

Bedecked by jewels quaint of form

    In *pherans*† robed, whose soft folds show  
Tints dyed by rays of sunset warm  
    Flame, crimson, orange, rose aglow!

With yon gay tulips they compare

    Which on these grass-grown house-tops  
    blow:

What types for artist's brush more fair

    Does all Srinagar's city know?

\* *Panditanis*, wives of Pandits or educated Hindus.

† *Pherans*, the long loose robe worn by the Kashmiris, men and women alike.

## THE MUGHAL GARDEN AT ACHIBAL

Thy murmuring waters seem to bless  
As with a tender soft caress  
All who are lulled here by their fall  
In garden fair of Achibal:  
And as on us they weave their spell  
They seem of ancient days to tell,  
And might the secrets all outpour  
Of full three hundred years and more.  
If you will listen close you'll hear  
These fountains whisper low and clear  
Of loves and hopes and fears which sigh  
Echoing faint from days gone by;  
Then tossing proud their waters gay  
They sing to me through falling spray  
Of Nur Mahal, whose heart's desire  
Was to this garden to retire:  
Here she would spend her happiest hours  
In watching their translucent showers.  
These lattice windows still remain—  
How light the touch of Time hath lain!  
We might behold the very scene  
As gazed on by that well-loved Queen.

It is indeed a pleasure sweet  
To linger in this old retreat—  
Those ancient stately days recall  
When elephants with *howdahs* tall  
The Great Mughal, and all his court  
From Delhi up to Kashmir brought:  
They surely thought 'twas worth the pain  
To view these gardens yet again—  
The Nishat Bagh, the Shalimar  
Vernag and Achibal afar—  
Retreats he beautified with care  
And finest taste and culture rare.  
Perhaps this one of Achibal  
Appeals to us the most of all—  
Turf, soft as breasts of peacocks green  
Chenars reflect clear in the sheen  
Of waters which all copious flow  
And ne'er are dry and we may go  
Within this old pavilion  
'Neath which the streams pellucid run,  
It's ceiling painted in rich hues—  
On every side enchanting views!  
What can with this at all compare  
E'en in this land of beauty fair?  
Or where could one more fondly muse  
Had we the whole wide world to choose?\*

\* The metre of these lines was suggested by the sound of the continuous flow of water at Achibal.

**PRETSI, THE BOATMAN'S DAUGHTER**

Your eyes sweet Pretsi! your soft, earnest eyes  
And oval, girlish face will haunting float  
Before me still—thus seated in your boat  
With dusky hair, in braids Madonna-wise,  
The amulet which on your bosom lies,  
Those coral beads around your slender throat  
With paddle poised: a most enchanting note  
For artist's canvas, which he well might  
prize.

The picture's in my heart! but Pretsi's shy  
And with a timid grace and bashful sigh  
Bends to her task, the boat is passing, yet  
She turns and glances back and throws me  
there  
A lotus bud she'd fastened in her hair  
And smiles; Ah Pretsi! would I could forget.

**WATER-WAYS ON THE DAL LAKE**

Alone I love to dream along  
The Dal lake's willowy water-ways  
And tune my heart to hear her song,  
A song which varies with the days.

My boat pursues reflections clear  
And 'twixt a tracery of leaves  
Mountains of amethyst appear  
Through filmy veils the soft air weaves.

All nature glows and throbs delight!  
I lie entranced: the atmosphere  
Bathed in this shining, radiant light  
Is steeped in colour soft yet clear.

When suddenly with flashing flight  
A brilliant streak of purest gold  
Darts swift across my waking sight,  
A glimpse of living joy untold!

The golden oriole, its note  
Of mellow music I can hear,  
As 'neath the willow boughs I float  
To catch its cadence low and clear.

Still onward ever yet we glide  
Through tangled brakes of whisp'ring reed  
Which their shy secrets thus confide  
If only we will harkening heed.

And now my *mangies*\* moor the boat  
To this green islet's peaceful shore—  
An island made of weeds to float,  
On which is grown a plenteous store

Of golden melons which I see  
A Kashmir beldame pluck and throw  
In her *shikara*† floating free,  
Then seat herself and paddling go.

With this her trophy piled on high,  
In picturesque confusion bright  
Of sun-kissed, glowing fruits which lie  
Reflected in the ripples light.

\* *Mangies*—Kashmiri boatmen.

† *Shikara*—Kashmiri country boat.



These little isles which like a dream  
Float baseless on the Dal lake's breast  
How like our human lives they seem—  
Mere dreams which here but fleeting rest.

I must return: the setting sun  
Extends the purple shadows deep  
Soft drifts of smoke, the day now done  
From many homesteads circling creep.

Our paddle's splash the only sound  
As stealing 'neath the shade we cling  
To *Takht-i-Suliman's* dark mound  
While silent birds swift nest-ward wing.

**A LEGEND OF THE NISHAT BAGH**

*(A Mughal Garden on the Dal Lake )*

“ Garden of Gladness ! ” The name doth echo  
Adown the centuries and in us wakes  
A chord responsive to the art which makes  
The Mughal Court far famed : for still here  
blow

The same gay flowers by each carved cascade  
O’er which the waters laugh in ripples clear,  
As when the Emperor’s favourite and Vizier  
The terraces for signs of zodiac laid.

Each cascade is a ribboned water-fall  
Which undulating simulates the grace  
Of plaited tress, or here perhaps we trace  
The form of flowing patterned silk : the wall  
Of waters made transparent by the flare  
Of fairy lamps in niches ’neath its flow  
Which beauteously at night display their glow  
And make the envious Shah Jehan declare

The garden of Nishat himself must own,  
Nor could he let a subject keep this prize,  
Which was the admiration of all eyes :  
And in his heart he ceaselessly made moan.

Thus Asaf Khan was—so the legend goes—  
Entreated by his Emperor for this place  
Or else the garden fair should lose its grace  
And Asaf Khan be overwhelmed with woes.

Threat'nings in vain! for Asaf Khan remained  
Still dumb; and Shah Jehan made furious  
vow

He'd cut off at their source the water's flow—  
Which threat he carried out, and never  
deigned

To re-instate in favour Asaf Khan,  
Or e'er forgiveness grant to his Vizier  
Who'd thus outvied the royal gardens near  
With this famed garden's still more perfect  
plan.

Asaf Khan rests despondent 'neath the shade  
And shortly sleeps, and seems in dreams to  
hear

The sound of waters once more flowing clear  
Which 'erst a paradise his garden made.  
But 'tis no dream! for splashing white with  
foam

The rill's live, leaping flow returns the same  
And wakens him, as if the soul now came  
Back to his garden's corpse, once the sad  
doom •

Of arid dryness had been all removed!

Was it the work of magic? No indeed!

The only magic which the work did speed

Was love and loyalty a servant proved:

With steadfast heart he risked his very life

At all costs to restore his master's joy;

Unknown, the means the servant could employ

To move all hindrance to the water's strife.

But it was done! Soon was the Emperor told,

The culprit straightway there before him  
brought,

Who trembling stood before th' assembled  
Court.

What punishment was meet for act so bold?

Blows? Fine? No! *Robe of Honour* in esteem

For faithful service and henceforth the right

To him he loved to draw the water bright

For Nishat from the royal garden's stream.

A pleasing legend this, which surely rings

Of something noble which will ever last

A link with human nature in the past,

And Mughal times alive before us brings.

Still what a spell those stately gardens hold

And memories romantic oft recall

Of Kings and Queens—the fairest Nur Mahal,

Whose names live on, enshrined in their rich  
mould.

**NANGA PARBAT\* FROM GULMARG**

A thought of God! disclosed to human eyes

Deep symbol of His transcendental power,  
Ethereal, yet sublime she lightly lies

A finger-post divine to Heaven doth tower.  
Great Nanga Parbat! Thou must wean our souls  
From aught that can defile or harm them  
here,

For, if such naked purity unrolls

Before us, 'tis a heavenly message clear  
And dimly we perceive what God's thoughts  
are:

Thy snowy summit mingling with the skies  
Floating remote o'er mundane things afar  
Interprets the sweet vision to our eyes.

A dream of matter here: in God's own Mind  
Thy true, eternal substance we shall find.

\* Nanga Parbat means a naked mountain.

**THE LEGEND OF GUPKAR HOUSE**

What is the secret of the haunting charm  
Which lies in this old house now desolate  
And left forlorn? Some strange untoward  
fate,  
Perchance some cruel spell has wrought such  
harm

Upon the garden fair! For pathways wild,  
Neglected, yet so full of natural grace  
There are, so over-grown we barely trace  
Their course, with fragrant lilac sprays o'er-  
piled

And iris white, death's symbols pale, ablow.  
The thicket dense of scented hawthorn here  
Embow'rs the tomb of some forgotten *pir*\*  
Whose fame of old these mossy head-stones  
show.

\* *Pir*—Muhammādan Saint.

And on the gray and broken slabs still lie  
A few *chirags*\* which gleam through foliage  
dim,  
In pious vague remembrance lit of him—  
So faint they're like the upward whisp'ring sigh  
Known but to God alone of some sad heart:  
Each Friday night a stealthy leopard steals  
Men say from mountains near and crouching  
kneels  
In Sabbath vigil o'er this tomb apart.  
  
A legend strange the villagers relate  
Of how a Hindu brought to Kashmir far  
His English bride—years since—to this Gup-  
kar:  
To her the lower part did dedicate  
Built western-wise, of this large rambling  
house,  
Above he built with oriental pride  
Chambers in Indian style—not for his bride,  
And other secret chambers which would rouse  
Suspicion in the breast of any wife  
Were she forbidden by her lord to go  
Up there, or seek by any means to know  
The way in which he spent half of his life.

\* *Chirags*—Small native lamps.

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In vain the brightest glories of Dal lake  
Stretching beneath this terraced garden fair  
Beguiled the lonely girl her fate to bear—  
Mysterious fate! which caused her heart to  
break!

For soon she died—and hence perchance 'tis  
why  
The house half-haunted seems, as if there  
clings  
About it yet remembrance of such things  
Which my heart's closest searching will defy.

Folly perhaps! for all is smiling now  
Beneath the sun which lights yon great chenars  
With vivid green through these fine lattice bars,  
And gay and sparkling lies the lake below.

\* \* \* \* \*

A sudden chill creeps o'er my heart—of *fear*  
The brightness seems all false! Beneath is  
gloom.

Rustling among the shadows of yon tomb  
*Surely the wings of Death I softly hear.*

**THE PIR PANJAL RANGE FROM SRINAGAR**

A mighty wave which threatening seems to  
loom

Its crest in crystal foam prepared to break  
And all Kashmir engulf, unto her doom!

That icy outline never may forsake  
The form bestowed when it tumultuous rose:

Restrained by powers titanic who decreed  
It ever should remain, poised, as it froze,  
A vision of sublimity indeed!

My spirit longs to soar and penetrate

That snowy boundary range remote and pure  
For there perchance lies hid far Heaven's gate  
Which once attained, my restless heart will  
cure.

But 'tis in vain I seek that region clear

When whisp'ring winds reply "Lo! Heav'n  
is here."

## MEMORIES OF GULMARG

O! for the wind in the pine-wood trees

O! for the flowery, scented breeze  
In far Gulmarg! in far Gulmarg!

O! for the wealth of flowers so blue

O! for the sound of the ring-dove's coo,

O! for that earth's soft covered breast

The turf my love's foot-steps have pressed,

And all the thousand scents which rise

To subtly haunt our memories,

Scents which spring from the very grass

As o'er its velvet growth we pass  
In far Gulmarg! in far Gulmarg!

O! for the babbling brook's clear flow

Dancing from Killan's heights below,

O! for the cold and gleaming snow

Which Apharwat doth proudly show,

And lights and shades which joyous play

On her grey-green slopes all through the day.

O! for the moonlight so serene  
As 'thwart the marg she casts her sheen,

O! for the rainbow tinted vale  
Which dream-like fades to vision pale  
In far Gulmarg! in far Gulmarg!

Their distant peaks great mountains rear  
Pure, shadowy guardians of Kashmir.

And now upon a dreary plain  
I wounded lie in aching pain  
How far Gulmarg! how far Gulmarg!

But when this pain comes to an end—  
My soul released—swift may it wend

To its true home—yonder I know  
Instead of Heaven,—God let me go,  
To far Gulmarg! To far Gulmarg!

**A FILIGREE OF GOLD AND SILVER**

A shimmering, tremulous light of leaves  
Seen through a haze of sunlight, when at  
dawn

Is spread a sheet of golden-tinted lawn  
Beneath a web of blossom which Spring  
weaves:

As if the sunbeams wandering past my eaves  
Had all been captured on this joyous morn,  
And to repay their debt had laughing sworn  
Largesse of gold, that blushing Spring  
receives.

Gold, for the silver blossoms thus outpoured  
Whose petals frail pledge us a rich reward  
In Autumn's luscious fruit, e'en now foretold  
By buds of peach and almond, which unfold  
Their tender hopes in fresh and dainty sheen  
Through faintest flush of rose and misty  
green.

## BIRDLIFE IN KASHMIR

True! Kashmir boasts not such a varied throng  
Of songsters as are England's dear delight,  
But many birds there are who nest among  
Her trees and meadows and entrance our  
sight;

The paradise-fly-catcher softly flits  
Between the leaves with graceful flutt'ring  
tail

Of purest white: restless, he never sits  
Upon a bough but threads the leafy veil,

In dazzling contrast to the foliage dark,  
The brilliant sunshine glinting on his plume;  
His mate, a bird of sober brown I mark,  
Sits peaceful near in her small nursery room.

Yon joyous bird the golden oriole—  
Fairy embodiment of living gold,  
In melodies so blithe pours out his soul,  
And lights the Dal's dim green with colour  
bold.

A tiny scarlet bird with ebon head,  
And many others bright of hue are here,  
Some vivid blue and others deeply red  
Among the many which frequent Kashmir.

Of all the throng, the *bulbul* seems to claim  
The dearest place; 'tis such a homely bird,  
With such endearing ways, fearless and tame  
And everywhere his cheerful note is heard.

When the Kashmiris their swift shuttles ply,  
Of this loved bird they patterns quaintly  
weave

Of *chashmi bulbul* or the *bulbul's* eye,  
Thus make their keen appreciation live,

And deftly form a symbol intricate  
Th' appraising eye of connoisseurs to please.  
True art! that nature thus should indicate  
Designs which these poetic craftsmen seize.

Upon the prows of many boats quite late  
Towards the dusk the kingfishers will rest  
And hov'ring plunge into the stream, then wait  
To dive again—the fish below their quest.

Entrancing 'tis to watch their turquoise flight  
With wings extended; or as motionless  
They poise, with plumes of opal sheen bedight  
Intent! Alert! keen vigilance express.

The hoopoe too, in fascinating crest  
And wings all striped in pattern alternate  
Of white and black, will take among the rest  
Of Kashmir's birds a place of honour great.

Hark! how his name hoopoe will reproduce  
His hollow note in quaint similitude.  
*Kastura's* tuneful melodies induce  
Memories of thrushes' songs in solitude.

'Midst haze of pale blue *Krishn*\* tufts there  
dwell  
Myriads of sky-larks by the Jhelum's shore  
Which visions dear of home also compel  
They here—as there—like warblings full out-  
pour.

\* *Krishn* is the Kashmiri name for the small blue iris, connected possibly with the Hindu god Krishna, whose characteristic colour is blue.



And higher in the uplands we may hear  
Greeting the Spring through scented pine-  
wood trees,  
Faint echoes sweet—the cuckoo calling clear  
Mingling with murmurs of the mountain  
bees.

How these bird-notes associations bring  
So closely dear of English wood and lane  
All those who dwell in far Kashmir in Spring  
Will realize with touch perhaps of pain.

**THE RUINED TEMPLE OF MARTAND**

On slope of vast and undulating plain  
In solemn solitude, of noble art,  
The ancient ruins of Martand remain  
Built for Sun worship once. Has the true  
part  
Of thy prone columns faded like a dream?  
Engirdled by the everlasting hills  
O Temple of the Sun! His radiant beam  
Illumes this broken altar, and still fills  
These shattered halls at dawn with his clear  
light.  
Though human hands may no more loving  
tend.  
The Sun's pure glory is God's symbol bright,  
Thus thy great destiny can never end:  
.  
Still eloquent of prayers, though stones decay  
And forms of ancient creeds have passed  
away.

**“JACOB’S LADDER”***(In Gulmarg)*

In Gulmarg have I seen  
Where earth and Heaven meet,  
For here beneath my feet  
Lies Heaven’s bluest sheen.

As if of old, men knew  
Your blooms were meant to be  
A link for us to see  
How near to Heaven’s blue

This stony earth is still,  
How God to us will send  
His “Angels”—thoughts—which wend  
From Heaven our minds to fill—

They gave you this dear name,  
For here when you’re ablow  
Is Bethel: this I know!  
For “Angels” came to me .

Upon your ladders blue—  
    Ah! how with Love divine  
My soul they close entwine  
    Those “ Angel-thoughts ” so true!

Perhaps too, I may climb  
    A little nearer God  
If I your blue rungs trod  
    “ Ladders ” to thoughts sublime.

**PERI MAHAL***(The Fairies' Palace)*

“Peri Mahal!” strange and romantic name  
Bestowed by folk-lore on this ancient pile  
Above the Dal lake's shore: I rest awhile  
And glance above—below—each line the  
same

Limned on the bosom of the lake: the fame  
Of elfin deeds I've heard, of fairy guile  
Luring lone wanderers here for many a mile,  
Their very souls and bodies then to claim.

A breath of wind and lo! the picture's gone,  
What wizard scene then have I gazed upon?  
The ruin hoar remains, its sad stern brow  
O'erhangs the shining lake in frowning  
gloom,  
Deserted—brooding lone—it's mystic doom!  
I'll flee! lest spell malign befall me now.

## DEODARS AND RUINED TEMPLES

*(On the road to Kashmir)*

Himâlaya's noble tree, great deodar!

Towering aloft in thy majestic grace  
On mighty rocks, whose clefts give narrow  
space

For thy strong roots—proud spread thy  
branches far,

Thy name means “Powerful”\* for no worm  
can mar.

Thy heart's sound strength: in Hindu cult we  
trace

True service for thee, while its priests will  
place

Lamps on thy boughs which for God's worship  
are.

Ye “Trees of God” in honour of His name  
Oft planted by these mountains temples nigh  
Now left gray ruins, and unknown to fame—  
Where echoes faint of prayers on night-winds  
sigh

Combining with your incense—deodars!  
Ye point in solemn vigil to the stars.

\*The deodar belongs to the cedar family. Cedar in Arabic is *kadr* which means literally “Power.”